

Massachusetts Urban Forestry Program

The Citizen Forester

June, 2008 No. 126

TCIA announces OSHA Safety Standard

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TCIA learned recently that OSHA intends to pursue a standard for tree care operations, so that arborists will one day work safely under clearly defined, applicable rules. The formal announcement appeared in RegInfo.gov, a U.S. Government web site produced by the Office of Management & Budget (OMB).

The tree care profession is historically one of the most dangerous occupations in the country. In 2006, in order to improve safety in our industry the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) formally petitioned OSHA for the promulgation of a separate standard for arbor occupations not covered by the current OSHA standard, 29 CFR §1910.269 (utility tree work), Electric Power Generation, Transmission, & Distribution.

Currently, OSHA guidance and enforcement for the tree care industry is based on a patchwork of outdated and extraneous regulations. The most contemporary standard is applicable only to a portion of our industry, 1910.269 is now 14 years old. Other standards created without input from our industry and applied to us after the fact create dysfunction and confusion. The Logging Standard, 29 CFR §1910.266, has been inaccurately applied to our profession by some jurisdictions. In addition to being administratively inefficient and ineffective for OSHA, the status quo is dangerous for arborists, who are often confused as to which standard applies.

The resulting confusion wastes OSHA's resources and leaves tree care workers and employers without clear federal guidance on the specific safety measures needed to reduce or eliminate the unique risks in our industry.

OSHA now intends to pursue promulgation of a separate arborist standard. We expect to see an "Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking" published in the Federal Register as early as August 2008. This is an unprecedented opportunity for the arboricultural industry to positively affect our destiny.

OSHA notes that, "... in the 11-year period from 1992 through 2002 for which

ornamental shrub and tree services fatality data are available from BLS, there were 637 fatalities in the industry, an average of about 58 fatalities per year or a rate of about 93 fatalities per 100,000 employees." Independent research through Dr. John Ball has uncovered a problem even more profound than the one OSHA seems to be aware of. In 2006 there were 175 documented occupational fatalities in tree care operations. Regardless of whose statistics you consider, clearer regulatory guidance and consultation from OSHA could help prevent fatalities and serious accidents.

The reality is that even today the Z133 Standard and the direct influence of organizations like TCIA and ISA reach only a small fraction of arboricultural practitioners in the U.S. Creating appropriate OSHA guidance will in effect allow us to recruit the 1,100 or so federal OSHA field compliance officers, a like number of OSHA's consultation and outreach personnel and an untold number of front line people in OSHA State Plan states to help us in our cause.

A separate OSHA arboriculture standard based upon Z133 would in no way undermine the importance of the Z133 Standard itself nor detract from the vital importance of ongoing standards development. Strong evidence supports the opposite assertion. When OSHA came into existence and first began to promulgate standards, it sought some early "wins" so it adopted several extant ANSI standards of the time as OSHA standards. Two relevant examples are ANSI B30 (cranes) and ANSI A92 (aerial lifts). Today, both of those standards and their committees continue to flourish and remain incredibly relevant. The OSHA standards they spawned have served a noble purpose and candidly are in need of revision today.

In the coming days and weeks, we would appreciate getting your comments and concerns about this endeavor. E-mail correspondence is preferred, and correspondence and other information should be sent to: Peter Gerstenberger at peter@tcia.org or alternately you may send your comments, etc. to: TCIA, 136 Harvey Road, Suite B101-B110, Londonderry, NH or fax them to (603) 314-5386.

Tree Care Industry (TCI) www.treecareindustry.org/index.aspx

Picks and Shovels

For more related information

OSHA Use their search engine for tree industry related information www.osha.gov

New England Chapter (ISA) Regional training opportunities
www.newenglandisa.org/index.html

Massachusetts Arborist Association (MAA) resources and training opportunities for MA Certified Arborist www.massarbor.org

Massachusetts Tree Wardens & Foresters Association resources and training opportunities for tree wardens and staff www.masstreewardens.org

Growing Greener

Town of Rowe

Rowe participated in the National Grid Augmented Clearance for Trees (ACT) program which partners with DCR U&CF program to provide funding for communities that work with the utility to remove trees that pose a significant risk of interrupting power service. Tree Warden and DPW Superintendent James Taylor chose to use the \$5,000 grant to plant trees around the picturesque Town Common where many of the mature shade trees had fallen prey to the malicious gnawing by a new resident in the pond adjacent to the common. The newly planted trees will be protected by wire cages.

Growing on Trees

New England Wild Flower Society has protected and preserved native plants through education, research, horticulture, habitat preservation, and advocacy for more than 100 years. Now plants are imperiled by threats unprecedented in their extent and impact: loss of habitat, invasive plants, and global climate disruption. To help fulfill its conservation mission, the Society boldly undertakes two major projects: Building a Native Plant Center – a multi-use building for retail, education, and business at Nasami Farm Nursery and Sanctuary and Endowing the Online New England Flora – the first web-based, comprehensive field guide to our region's native plants for scientists and novices alike. For more information, please contact Dianne Butt, Director of Development, at 508-877-7630 x 3104 or dbutt@newenglandwild.org.

National Network of Forest Practitioners (NNFP), and partners, recently received a \$100,000, 18-month, grant to train community forestry businesses on web marketing, and to market a national "portal site" that will increase traffic to small sustainable wood businesses. If you have a business producing products from sustainable forestry, contact Colin Donohue to be added to the list of interested persons. For more information on the WERC grant, visit: <http://www.na.fs.fed.us/werc/>

On The Horizon

Urban Forestry Solutions for Storm Water Planning 10:00 a.m. Central / 11:00 Eastern June 16, 2008 from the convenience of your desk top computer join in on a UNRI Webcast <http://www.unri.org/webcasts/>

UMass Turf Research Field Day June 18, 2008 - South Deerfield, MA

Come to learn about cutting-edge turf research, network with colleagues, and meet with vendors. Pesticide recertification contact hours will be available for all New England states. Online registration and information is available at: www.umassturf.org/education/annual_events/field_day.html or by contacting the UMass Extension Landscape/Nursery/Urban Forestry Program at 413-545-2685

Technology in the Urban Forest: Noon Central / 1:00 p.m. Eastern June 19, 2008 from the convenience of your desk top computer join in on an ACT Webcast with Holli

Howard, Director of GIS & IT, Casey Trees (Washington, DC) Scott Maco, Research and Development Analyst, Davey Tree (Seattle, WA)
http://actrees.org/site/stories/act_webcast_series.php

New England Wild Flower Society's Nasami Farm's Open House, free weekly lecture/demonstrations at Nasami Farm, the Society's native plant nursery, 128 North Street, Whately, Massachusetts 413-397-9922. www.newenglandWILD.org

The Great Ideas Summer Conference: July 23, 2008 The Crane Estate, Ipswich, MA Join Massachusetts' largest green industry associations - MFGA and MNLA - for their fifth annual collaborative event, the 2008 Summer Meeting and Trade Show at one of the region's most scenic, historically important and ecologically diverse landscapes...The Crane Estate. For more information go to www.mnla.com

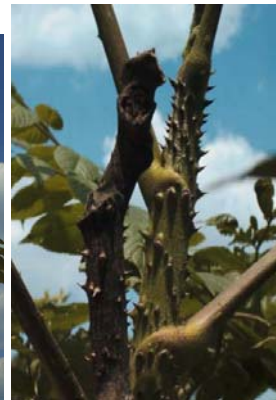
Species Spotlight

Aralia spinosa

Devils Walking Stick

Hardiness Zone 4

General Description: Native from Pennsylvania down through Florida this slow growing deciduous small tree or shrub grows 10' - 20' tall in a multi-stemmed habit. Summer texture is medium turning coarse in winter. The dark green leaves are arranged alternately along its branches and are bi-pinnately compound growing 32" to 64" long with serrated leaf margins; fall color is an inconsistent yellow-green. Flowers are borne in July on foot long terminal panicles as pubescent small, whitish flowers. Fruit matures in late August as black drupes .25" long and attract birds. The bark is straw colored with prickles and large moon shaped leaf scars and lenticels.



Culture: Tolerant of urban conditions and easily transplanted, prefers moist well drained acid soils, plant in full sun to partial shade.

Landscape Use's: Plant as a specimen or as a border planting, the thorny stems and multi stem growth habit forms a good deterrent for foot traffic.

Liabilities: Suckers and spreads readily, prickles can make it challenging to work around.

Cultivars/Varieties; none

For more information, see www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/a/araspi/araspi1.html

The Citizen Forester is made possible through a grant from the USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Bureau of Forestry.

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